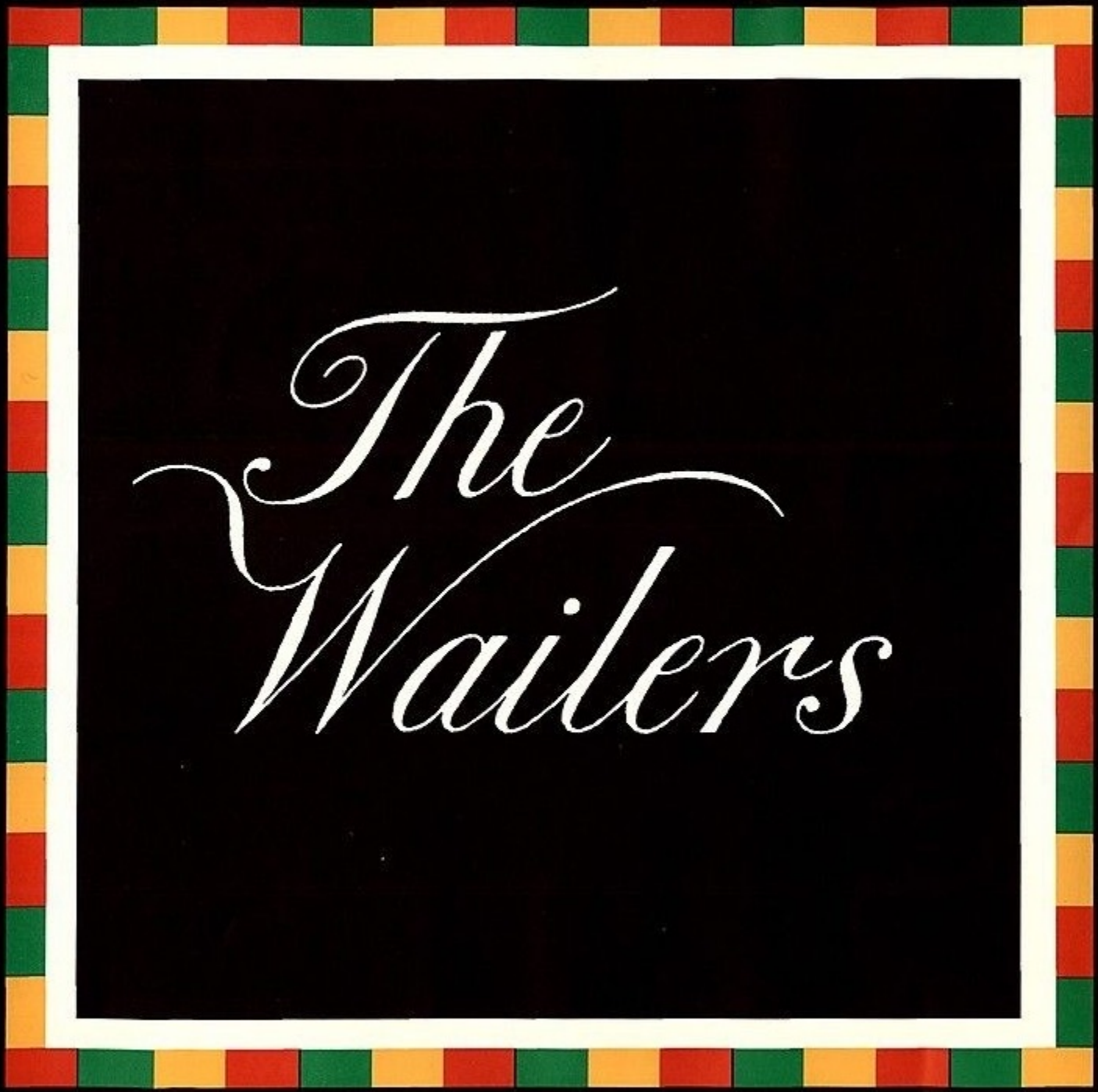
The
Wailers

The first genius of reggae?

BOB MARLEY, slightly-built and quiet to the point of diffidence, is a leader. He's the master of Reggae, the man who's about to give it that big shove out of its normal cultural confinement and into the rest of the world.

The consequences of this action may be drastic for the health of the music. It could be the making of Reggae, or could sap its vitality beyond repair. But that won't affect Marley, because for the past seven years he's been making the best music to be heard in Jamaica, and his potential is limitless.

He and his group, the Wailers, have an album called "Catch A Fire" out here next week, on Island's Blue Mountain label. It seems to me that this may be the most important Reggae record ever made — it's equivalent of Sly's "Dance To The Music," or Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On."

It has that kind of potential: revitalising the style from which it springs, and introducing it to an entirely new audience. A few years will need to have passed before we'll know for sure, but Marley may even be a genius.

Like many great musicians, he's a different man inside the recording studio. The shyness is stripped away, and he becomes totally as one with the music, controlling it and swaying in sympathy with the extraordinary rhythm patterns he draws from his bassist, Aston "Family Man" Barret, and his drummer, Family Man's brother Carlton.

Marley's musical assurance comes from a considerable depth of experience. At 28, he's been burned and hassled as badly as most of his Jamaican contemporaries, but unlike a lot of them he's putting the knowledge he's gained to good use.

He can see why and how he got burned, and he's going to make sure it doesn't happen again. What's happened to him already, though, gives him just as much right to sing the blues as Robert Johnson ever had.

HE was born in Kingston, Jamaica, the son of a white British Army captain from Liverpool — "I only remember seeing him twice, when I was small" and a black Jamaican who wrote spirituals and sang in the local Apostolic Church.

Unlike most half-castes, who violently take one side or another, it's given him an unusually open view of race: "I don't really check people's colour," he says.

Bob sang in church, too, but he didn't care for it.

"I preferred dancing music. I listened to Ricky Nelson, Elvis, Fats Domino . . . that kind of thing was popular with Jamaican kids in the Fifties. The only English speaking radio station we heard was from Miami, but we got a lot of Latin stations, mostly from Cuba, before and after Castro."

He began to learn welding as a trade.

"But I loved so sing, so I thought I might as well take the chance. Welding was too hard! So I went down to Leslie Kong at Beverley's Records in '64, and made a record on a single-track machine. Jimmy Cliff took me there — he was Beverley's number one man."

The record was called "One Cup Of Coffee," and the world ignored it. But Marley, undaunted, went back to the woodshed

"My greatest influence at the time was the Drifters — 'Magic Moment,' 'Please Stay,' those things. So I figured I should get a group together."

He assembled four other kids: Peter Mackintosh (vocals, piano, organ, guitar) and Bunny Livingstone (vocals, congas, congos), who're still with him today, plus a boy named Junior and a girl, Beverley Kelso.

He wrote a song called "Simmer Down." They rehearsed it, and went to see producer Coxon Dodd, who liked and recorded it, putting it out on his Coxsone label.

"It went off like a bullet," says Bob.

"But they didn't tell me how much to sell . . . that's supposed to be the private business of the producer. I don't remember how much

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money to share between five, so two of the group left. Junior went to live in America, and Beverley . . . well, she was kinda slow-like. She didn't have good timing."

After they left Coxon Dodd, Bob and his mother left Jamaica for a while.

"It was hard in Kingston, so we went to live in America, in Wilmington, Delaware. I rehearsed by myself in our basement, where it was nice and quiet, but after a few months I went back to Jamaica, and I thought I might as well continue with the Wailers."

He got Peter and Bunny back together, and they decided to form their own record label.

"That's a big move, in Jamaica. Prince Buster was the first to start the revolution by leaving the producers and doing it himself. They myself, then Lee Perry . . . and you can't count the rest.

"It's better to know for yourself if your record is a flop, than have someone else tell you. And if your record sells good, the producer pretends he's gone to Nassau when you come by the office. In Jamaica, you're expected to use your knife, or your machete, or your gun."

That first label was called Wailin' Soul, but it got off to a bad start when Bunny was jailed for almost a year on a ganja rap — and those who've seen The Harder They Come may understand the Machiavellian implications of frame-up behind that.

At that point around '68, American singer Johnny Nash and his manager, Danny Simms, came on the scene. They were looking for talent, saw Bob singing on Jamaican TV, and signed him up.

Bob recorded an album for their JAD label, but from it only one single — "Bend Down Low" — ever saw the light of day, in the States. However they took Bob's song "Stir It Up," recorded already by the Wailers on Coxsone, and turned it into a worldwide smash for Nash, who also used other Marley songs ("Guava Jelly," "Belly Rub") on his "I Can See Clearly Now" album.

They even took Marley to Sweden for three months, to help write the music for a film starring Nash which has yet to be released, and over in England they got a single by him out on CBS — "Reggae On Broadway," with which he's far from satisfied because Nash had too much influence on the production.

"He's a hard worker, but he didn't know my music. I don't want to put him down, but Reggae isn't really his bag.

"We knew of Johnny Nash in Jamaica before he arrived, but we didn't love him that much. We appreciated him singing the kind of music he does — he was the first US artist to do Reggae — but he isn't really our idol. That's Otis or James Brown or Pickett, the people who work it more hard."

Going to Sweden did Bob's business no good: "When I came back, it was all mash (ruined). I'm the only one who takes a real interest in it. Jamaica's a place where you sit around and get high. I'm not gonna do that: I get high, but I don't like sitting around too much."

So on his return, in 1970, he started a new label, Tuff Gong, and also a record shop. The Soul Shack on King Street in Kingston. The shop is mostly devoted to selling records by the Wailers and Rita and the Soulettes. Rita Marley is known as Bob's wife, but they aren't actually married — it was just an idea to get some publicity for one of her records.

They stock the old Wailers records on Coxsone, their six 45s on Wailin' Soul, and the dozen-or-so they've released on Tuff Gong, including their biggest hit to date — the fantastic "Trenchtown Rock," which sold about 25,000 and was Jamaica's number one for three weeks around Christmas 1971, and the recent mind-destroying "Satisfy My Soul (Jah Jah)."

The problem for a small label is getting airplay: "You have to be big friends with the radio disc-jockeys, take them out and treat them like family. They make up the radio station charts, and people only buy what's in the charts."

Bob is not unduly optimistic about the business side of the Jamaican music scene.

"We've hurt the big guys by starting our own labels, because all they've got left is the studios and the pressing-plants. But the business will only change when younger guys appear, who'll deal fairly with the artists. The older guys will never get better."

It was island's Chris Blackwell who gave Bob the chance to use a lot of time and a fair amount of money to make the "Catch A Fire" album. Advances to Jamaican artists are unknown — but Blackwell saw the potential in Marley, and the two men tacitly decided to trust each other.

The result is the first example of Marley's music which hasn't been hampered by absurdly low budgets.

The album has several quite long tracks, maybe the first extended Reggae songs, but Bob says: "They're always like that in the studio, and then they get cut down to three minutes or something.

"Jamaica is a place where the musicians are restricted, going into the studio and just playing the same old thing because they're afraid that anything different might not sell.

"What we need here is people who're not concerned with holding the artists down. But I don't think it'll happen for a long time."

Make no mistake — Marley is potentially a giant figure

MELODY MAKER

Catch-A-Fire!

YES, quite simply, they are just that fabulous and just that important. The Wailers have arrived here from Kingston, Jamaica for a month-long tour and I don't think I'm sticking my neck out one little bit when I say that before they leave, they will have established their position right up there with the cream of contemporary musicians.

You've probably noticed the significant acclaim for their recent album "Catch-A-Fire" and wondered with crazed incredulity how anything remotely connected with reggae music could attract such cultured hyperbole. Well, the Wailers use the ethnic merely as a foundation, just as Stevie Wonder and Curtis Mayfield utilise their soul music roots as the core from which spring the seeds of fertile musical imagination. Under the leadership and inspiration of Bob Marley, the Wailers have broadened the scope of West Indian music — they have added subtlety, inventiveness, and technical virtuosity to the inherent rhythm of their music.

I caught their first appearance at Lancaster University and if that is anything to go by, they should be a wow. It usually takes flash, volume, or reputation to launch a band on the college circuit but the Wailers won through with rhythm, electronic creativity, style, and control. Those boys have played together for some time—and it shows.

Bob Marley oozed the shy charismatic style of the "Freewheeling" Bob Dylan. They kept it real cool, almost aloof but not so much as to lose control over the audience. They blew a smoky, sultry, toe-curling set, and then left. I think it's called star quality.

The line-up is Pete McIntosh on lead; Aston "Family Man" Barrett with the solidest bass line you ever heard; Aston's brother Carlton providing the backbone on drums; Bunny Livingstone maintaining the ever-changing and shifting rhythms on bongoes and congas; Earl "Wire" Lindo, the new man, on organ, clavinet, and synthesiser; and Bob Marley on guitar and lead vocals.

They kicked off right down at the roots with an old Rasta chant which they call "Chant A." It served it's purpose of arousing the curiosity of the students while whetting their appetites. Then straight into "Slave Driver" from the album which, like nearly all their numbers, was tortuously intricate — slow yet juicy.

We were lucky enough to get a couple of slabs from their next L.P. which they're in the process of completing at the Island studios. They were "Duppy Conqueror" and "Small X" which illustrated how mature their work is becoming all the time and yet how they retain their basic simplicity.

Bob went back a few years for the next one which was "Ben Down Low" — less involved than some of their later stuff, and with a slightly rougher edge — but no less satisfying. The Jamaican penchant for cleverly ribald humour came to light with "Kinky Reggae." The lengthy "Concrete" followed — an instrumental that allowed full rein to their musical abilities — tight and funky.

Two vocals: "Stir It Up" by Bob and the soulful "Stop That Train" sung by "Tosh" put them both high in the ranks of Black soul singers — "Tosh" sounded like Joe Simon and that's a compliment.

Finally the lilting Curtis Mayfield-style "Keep On Movin'" which reinforced the mysterious Johnny Copasetic's theories on the links between Curtis and reggae. No encore — nothing silly.

I look forward to seeing the Wailers again very soon — start the queue here. —

DAVID MILTON

MELODY MAKER

WAILERS/SPEAKEASY

IF YOU FOUND the Wailers' debut Island album, "Catch A Fire", an uncomfortable sidestep to your usual tastes, I'd strongly advise you to witness a gig during their current British tour. Last week, I saw three of the band's London dates and found their brand of energy to be refreshing and exhilarating.

Before seeing them play, the album seemed enjoyable, but it was only after the Speakeasy (Wednesday and Friday) and Fulham Greyhound (Sunday) that "Catch A Fire" became a precious possession. Their sets combined some choice pre-Island tunes (like "Doppy Conquer" and "Keep On Moving"), most of "Catch A Fire" and a couple of newer things.

Of the unrecognisable ones, "Stand Up For Your Rights", stood out as perhaps the most exciting song they played. The chorus is infectious and Bob Marley's pained vocal cuts through you, making this one an obvious candidate for a single. On two occasions their set ended with that song, but on Friday at the Speakeasy, the audience simply would not let them leave the stage.

From the moment they walked on stage and cast a spell with their Rasta chant, that night was magical. The entire foot of the stage was packed with people diggin' every note of what went down. The constant spurring-on by the crowd — who danced and hollered for their favourite tunes — coached the Wailers to that ultra-rare musical Nirvana.

Although their performances share a healthy portion of ethnic looseness, the band is well rehearsed and the harmonies are in key and on cue. The Barrett brothers, Aston and Carlton, have to be seen (and *felt*) to be believed; they're a devastating rhythm section. Lead singer and rhythm guitarist Bob Marley guides the proceedings, as well as providing fascinating facial contortions. DANNY HOLLOWAY

NEW MUSICAL EXPRESS

catch the Wailers

Bob Marley and the Wailers have been on the Jamaican music scene for a long time. Bob, Peter and Bunny must surely be the most consistent of all the Jamaican vocal groups. They have been singing professionally for more than ten years and have had a rough time! They have been pushed around, used and abused, but as the saying goes 'when a man is good, no matter what you try to do, you just can't keep him down.' Many have tried to keep Bob and his two friends Peter and Bunny down but throughout all of these trials but they have always come out on top. Bunny once told me that there were lots of times they were tempted to give things up, but thanks to Joe Higgs, who helped them to bring out their talents. Joe Higgs was the man who helped them to blend their 'wailing' harmonies for which they are well known.

The Wailers are great, and Bob is going to be in the future one of the world's greatest songwriters. These guys are devoted to their music, they live for it, and love it. They have succeeded where others failed because they have taken time to learn to play the music as well as sing it. Versatility seems to be their motto, Bob for instance who plays guitar, and bass, can also vamp on the organ and beat the drums. Peter plays guitar, bass, piano, melodisca and a little of the organ. Bunny also plays the guitar, bass and congas. Bunny is very philosophical on his outlook to life.

Last year Bob and The Wailers added two new members to their group, they are Aston 'Family Man' Barratt and Carlton his brother. 'Family Man' as he is known by all his friends is Jamaica's best bass guitarist, he also plays rhythm lead guitar, piano, melodisca, organ and writes a little. He is most creative, and is usually very quite, well reserved and is one of the necest persons you can ever meet. He knows what to play and when to play it. Until recently, before he and his brother teamed up with Bob, they played a very high percentage of the music that came from Jamaica. The combination that the two brothers play between the bass and rums is very unique. Carlton in my opinion is the steadiest of all the reggae drummers, his timing is perfect. The two brothers are star musicians in their own rights. 'Family Man' was largely responsible for the formation a few years ago, of what was one of Jamaica's most popular groups, The UPSETTERS, who enjoyed a long stay over here with their international hit record "The Return of the Django".

Bob and the Wailers have signed up with Island Records. They have a new Album out called "Catch a Fire" and there is no doubt about it, when you hear it with the "Soul" thats in it, with the superb reggae backing it is a winner, and it will as the title suggests set your Soul on Fire. The Wailers, for all their fans, will be here shortly to finish an an L.P. and to do a tour, so don't miss them. They'll be here singing and playing songs such as "Screw Face", "Trench Town Rock", "Keep on Moving", "Satisfy my Soul", "Soul "Soul Rebel", "African Herbsman", "Riding High" and countless more so keep an eye out for the most superb, fantastic, magnificent reggae group ever to come out of sunny Jamaica. Don't miss the Wailers.

CALYPSO

The Wailers - A "New" Sound 400 Years Old
(Everything You Need to Know About Reggae)

By SEBASTIAN CLARKE

Bob Marley and the Wailers constitute a vigorous reawakening of sound within the Jamaican musical scene, and with the release of their current Island album, *Catch A Fire*, they have, with finality, silenced all derogatory remarks that have been made by British commentators in various levels of media control.

The Wailers represent a decade of music consistent with the various changes and innovations that Jamaican music has experienced, and with their sane (read "radical") view of the world, express the lives and dreams of a proportion of Jamaicans. For from the inception of the Wailers, after Bob Marley, a professional singer and recording artist at age fifteen with Beverley's, decided in 1962 to form a group that with greater co-ordination, precision and similarity of purpose, could express a music that would be, ideally, at one with the collective experience of Jamaicans. A music that would not be divorced from the difficult struggles and tribulations of the man-in-the-street. Originally, there were four other members besides Bob, but as the music progressed and demanded a more serious approach and method of discipline, the other two were asked to leave, leaving Bunny Livingstone and Peter Tosh. All three are proficient songwriters, though the material of Bob and Peter has been the foundation of the group, with Bob commanding a more recognized and prestigious position as a result of his penmanship of Johnny Nash's hit, *Stir It Up*, and the inclusion of three of his other songs on Nash's *I Can See Clearly Now* album.

In Jamaica the music scene has experienced three changes: after the original emergence of recorded Jamaican music (which was a sharp imitation of the musical styles of the Black American's R&B preoccupation) *Ska*, *Rock Steady* and *Reggae* emerged and dominated the musical scene for successive periods of time; today we find the emergence of *Shank*, a shuffle dance. Harry J, currently one of the most esteemed Jamaican producers, has been one of the leading exponents of this current trend, and his recordings of this new music are contained on the flip sides of all his British Blue Mountain releases. "Shank," says Bunny, "is the freedom of the self. Whatever you feel like doing, you just do it. You don't have any special thing, any special routines to do; you just free yourself. You express your dancing how you feel it—you have to be yourself."

The Wailers' music precisely reflects the intricate rhythmic pattern of the Jamaican life-style and some of their early music is "nasty"—so "unrefined" (to sophisticated ears), that only patience and repeated hearings/playings will force the self (if you are honest enough) to admit of their originality, and uniqueness. Bob's unusual vocal phrasings and timing, sometimes reminiscent of a talk-singing sermon of a Baptist preacher, almost reciting poetry, raises the intensity to a high level of emotionality. His coarseness of voice also serves as a radical contrast to Peter's straight singing and Bunny's almost falsetto voice in the background. "Duppy Conqueror," an early single released in England by Trojan, is a good example of this type of experience I am describing. Bob regards the single as "life. . . . It's life we dal with. Not death. He that sees the light and knows the light shall live." "If wisdom," says Bunny, "and knowledge are the highest form of a man. The highest form of a man is knowing all things, then how can a man know all things in 21, 22, or 50 years? You will have to live forever to know all things. And that's what we intend doing, because we praise Life, the living foundation. The said Christ they claimed they crucified is the Christ we praise, who liveth today."

The music of the Wailers reflects a continual synthesising of four hundred years of diverse influences and experiences of living in the so-called New World. The Wailers are determined for the New World to be truly new. And this is the axis of evolution, perpetual change and renewal of reality.

The Wild Side of Paradise

Steaming with the Rude Boys, the Rastas and Reggae

by Michael Thomas

The Wailers must have had 70 or 80 singles out and just about every one of them made the charts; Marley wrote "Stir It Up" and "Guava Jelly" and taught Johnny Nash everything he knows about Jamaican rhythm, but he's still down in Ghost Town sitting 'round half-naked and flat broke. He's probably the most gifted street poet on the whole scene because he gets it first-hand—and the thing about reggae is that it's always been upbeat shantytown blues, the songs are storm warnings from the suffering Israelites crying to be heard after 400 years of slavery and neglect, and Marley pleads their case better than anybody. Songs like "Slave Driver" and "Concrete Jungle" sound sweet and catchy, but they're as bitter as wine gone to vinegar. He sings in a loose rheumy way, the guitar player plays lovely sinister atmospherics, and the whole thing is so stylish and goes down so easily you might miss the message first time through, you might miss the dire threat—

Every time I hear the crack of a whip,
My blood runs cold,
I remember on the slave ship,
How they brutalized my very soul—
Slave driver,
The tables have turned,
Catch-a-fire,
You're gonna get burned . . .

Bob's been burned and cheated and spun out and spit on so many times it's a wonder the pressure hasn't got the better of him by now, but it hasn't. They can't touch him. He's a Rasta. And the Rastas don't even speak the same language.

The pressure can't touch Bob Marley now—he's a Rasta. And Rastas don't even speak the same language.

THE WAILERS. "CATCH A FIRE."

"Catch a Fire is a fabulous and important album." *Richard Williams Melody Maker (London) March 1973*

"Also catch a fire" is beautiful, reassuringly mellow, full-sounding music. Try it. Try listening to a track like "Stop That Train" or "Stir It Up" and try to forget about the damn song, try to get it out of your mind. It just won't leave you in peace." *Phonograph Record Magazine (L.A.) March 1973*

"Bob Marley has been at the top for years, he didn't just arrive yesterday. It's just that recognition has been a long time coming. *Danny Holloway NME March 24, 1973*

"Bob Marley and The Wailers are the first band to come out of Jamaica who will crack the international market. An album of highly original and perfectly played music that will make people who didn't like reggae change their opinion." *Ray Carr NME April 1973*

Catch A Fire

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Wailers

REGGAE HAS earned itself a variable reputation in this country with its occasionally montonous rhythms and inaudable lyrics, but that is often because British reggae is very much a watered down form of the original Jamaican sound.

At London's Speakeasy last Thursday, were Bob Marley and The Wailers, proving that West Indian music is still very much a developing form and that, for the time being at least, reggae is here to stay.

The Wailers' particular kind of vocal harmony is based mainly on fifths and octaves that wander off the note with the same tension-building accuracy of all negro music forms, the blues included.

The music is basically happy. In fact it is fun. The group injects a seriousness into their performance which is not present in the actual sounds being produced, except in the words. They sing of life in the ghetto, the concrete jungle and teenage social and sexual problems.

The basis for their particular sound is in the echoing, amplified, tinny-drum sounds that Bunny Livingstone manages to get from his bongos – sounding like rim-shots in the bathroom. On to this is added Aston Barrett's persuasive bass runs, Charlie Barrett's basic drum rhythms, Peter Mackintosh's chunky organ and guitar and Bob Marley's high lead vocals and occasional, quite heavy, guitar breaks.

Depending on the mood of the listener, the most fascinating thing about their music is that it can be regarded as fast and stompy or slow and smoochy. The beat is a basic 4/4 with an accent on the downbeat and a tendency to sound like 5/4. It is a foot-tapping, body-swinging, stomach-lurching sort of sound.

Britain has waited a long time for a band to come from Jamaica and demonstrate what reggae is really all about. It is to be hoped that The Wailers have not come too late to revitalise what could otherwise become an extinct music form outside of its native setting.

REX ANDERSON

MUSIC WEEK

Reggae as it really is – by the guvnors

I HAVE to admit it. There was a time when I just couldn't stomach reggae. Its metronomic rhythms failed to stimulate me in the slightest. But over the last twelve months I've learned to love it.

I can now see that the skinheads were right to shun progressive rock with its emphasis on the cerebral in favour of gut appeal reggae, which like all black music aims for the heart and the body rather than the mind.

There is now an awakening of interest in the ethnic form of the music — which is why the 'guvnor' reggae band, Jamaica's 'Wailers' are currently touring Britain.

Led by a talented gentleman called Bob Marley — who wrote Johnny Nash's 'Stir It Up' among others — the Wailers have dominated the West Indian scene for a decade now and at Leicester Polytechnic last night they showed why.

It was the Wailers who pioneered the now classic approach of the West Indian music. Its lead vocals, always slightly through echo, are submerged in the general "mix" rather than dominating the sound as in English rock.

Clean and crisp

The powerhouse of the band is drummer Charlie Barrett, whose fill-ins were nothing short of miraculous and bass Aston Barrett, who delivered the goods with a perfect economy of action — holding back on the off-beat and thereby doubling the impact.

And over it all there was the clean crisp dampened chords of the two guitarists — giving the overall sound its distinctive rhythm.

Where the Wailers score over most other reggae bands is in their imaginative use of soul-type harmonising with Marley taking the lead vocals and the other members answering in the classic gospel orientated call and response style.

Featuring mainly material from their excellent new album, 'Catch A Fire' the group answered all those who claim that reggae is samey and repetitive with a beautifully balanced set ranging across the complete spectrum of the genre.—P.B.

LEICESTER MERCURY

THE WAILERS. "CATCH A FIRE."

"Mature, fully realised sound with a beautiful lyric sensibility that turns well known stylistics into a fresh, vibrant music." *Rob Houghton Rolling Stone (USA) April 12, 1973*

"This record (Catch a Fire) is the one which will snare rock fans, making them aware of Reggae's inherent beauty and vast potential." *The Times (London) March 24, 1973*

"Marley is perhaps the heaviest cat on the island. If you consider that Sly Stone and Marvin Gaye are American geniuses then Bob Marley might well emerge as the Jamaican genius . . . truly he's a virtuoso." on a par with the very finest." *Richard Williams Melody Maker (London) September 30, 1972*

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